

VZCZCXRO9749  
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #0675 0740942  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 150942Z MAR 09  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2170  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000675

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/13/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: ANTI-CORRUPTION UPDATE

REF: BAGHDAD 584

Classified By: ANTI-CORRUPTION COORDINATOR JOSEPH STAFFORD, REASON 1.4  
(B AND D)

#### DISCUSSIONS WITH RELIGIOUS FIGURES

-----

¶1. (C) Anti-Corruption Coordinator (ACC) and staff recently met separately with three Iraqi religious figures: Grand Ayatollah Hussein Al-Sadr, the senior Shia cleric in Baghdad, Ahmed Abdel Ghafour Al-Sammarraie, head of the GOI's Sunni Endowment, and Harith Al-Obaidy, Sunni cleric and parliamentarian (deputy chairman of the Council of Representatives' Human Rights Committee). They readily acknowledged that corruption was a major problem in Iraq and that the country's religious establishment needed to do its part in combatting it. All pointed to their individual efforts on this score; Ayatollah Al-Sadr stated that the importance of upright governance was among the themes covered in books he had authored on Islamic thought as well in the programs featured on his television station, Salam. Al-Sammarraie spoke of weaving anti-corruption themes into the lectures that he regularly gave to groups of GOI officials, businessmen, and others. Al-Obaidy mentioned that in his Friday sermons he frequently weighed in against corrupt practices, reminding his congregation that such practices were totally unacceptable under Islam. The trio stressed the need for continued USG support for Iraq's anti-corruption efforts and agreed to further discussions on possible cooperation in this area.

#### CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

-----

¶2. (U) The GOI is making progress on a key element of its anti-corruption effort -- reducing corruption among public employees through civil service reform. The draft of a comprehensive civil service reform law is currently circulating within the GOI and is expected to be ready for submission to the Council of Representatives later this year. The measure, assuming its enactment, will represent a major step forward in the establishment of a professional, apolitical civil service in which opportunities for corruption are considerably reduced. The GOI recently took an initial step in this direction; in February it enacted the Federal Civil Service Commission Law, which provides for the establishment of an independent commission to enforce civil service laws in lieu of individual ministries, which previously were responsible for enforcement. Together, the February law and the forthcoming comprehensive measure bring Iraq closer to full compliance with civil service-related requirements in the UN Convention against Corruption, which Iraq ratified in March 2008.

#### MORE ON FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE SUBMISSIONS

-----

¶3. (C) Reftel reported Commission on Integrity (COI) head Judge Rahim Al-Uqaili's March 2 announcement that 17 Minmisters (or officials of equivalent rank) had submitted

annual financial disclosure statements -- a legal requirement of senior officials often ignored -- for 2008. The COI subsequently announced that Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki, for the first time, had submitted a statement and that the total number of ministerial-level submissions had now reached 120. The COI noted to the press that over half of the GOI's 54 ministerial-level officials had yet to submit their statements and warned that those failing to do so would be suspended. (COMMENT: We doubt that any official failing to submit a statement will actually face suspension or any other sanction. As noted in reftel, in the past the relevant legal requirement has been widely ignored and, to our knowledge, no officials have previously been sanctioned. Moreover, it is not clear that the COI actually has the authority to impose Qnot clear that the COI actually has the authority to impose suspensions; COI head Judge Rahim had previously complained to us about lack of clear authority to impose sanctions for failure to submit statements. END COMMENT)

BUTENIS